

# Maastricht University graduate surveys 2010

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# Maastricht University graduate surveys 2010

## ROA Fact Sheet

ROA-F-2011/2

Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA  
*Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market | ROA*

## Maastricht University graduate surveys 2010

What career paths do graduates of Maastricht University follow? Where do they work? How well does their occupation fit the content of their study programme? How well does Maastricht University prepare its students to operate in an international labour market? These and other questions are discussed in this fact sheet. We present the main results of the graduate surveys that were conducted among Maastricht University graduates in the spring of 2010. In Part A we discuss the results for alumni who graduated in the academic year 2003-2004 (some 5.5 years prior to the survey) and for alumni who graduated in the academic year 1998-1999<sup>1</sup> (some 10.5 years prior to the survey). In Part B, we present the results of a survey among foreign alumni who graduated between the academic years 1998-1999 and 2006-2007.<sup>2</sup>

### Part A: Cohort 1998-1999 and cohort 2003-2004

#### Position in the labour market

Almost all Maastricht University alumni in the two cohorts are currently active in the labour market (see Table 1). 93% of the 2003-2004 cohort and as many as 96% of the 1998-1999 cohort had paid work in 2010. 3% of the 2003-2004 graduates and 2% of the 1998-1999 graduates were unemployed. Despite the current economic downturn these unemployment rates can be seen as frictional rather than structural: even in the best of times we would expect to find a certain proportion of respondents between jobs. Taken together, employment and unemployment rates indicate that 96% and 98% respectively of the 2003-2004 and 1998-1999 cohorts belonged to the labour force in 2010. Only the alumni of the Arts and Social Sciences faculty and Psychology and Neuroscience faculty show a somewhat lower rate of participation in the labour force (for the 2003-2004 cohort 92% of the alumni of the former faculty and 90% of the alumni of the latter faculty belong to the labour force). The majority of the small proportion of respondents who are not active in the labour market (4% of the 2003-2004 cohort and 2% of the 1998-1999 cohort) are either in education or taking care of children or other relatives. No differences in labour market participation were observed between female and male respondents in either cohort.

Many of the alumni have changed jobs at least once since graduation. Figure 1 shows that the alumni in the 1998-1999 cohort have had almost 4 different jobs on average (including their current job). In fact, only 8% are still employed in their first job. The graduates from the SBE in this cohort have the highest job mobility. On average,

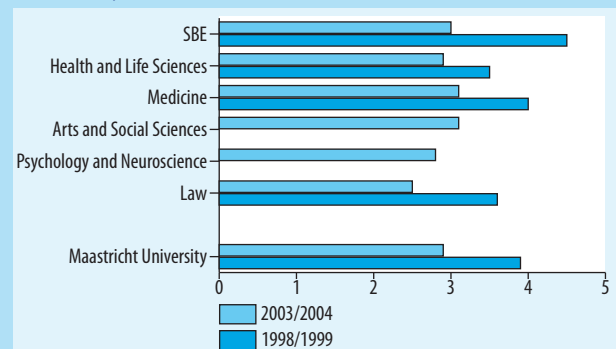
alumni who graduated in 2003-2004 are in their third job since leaving Maastricht University. Although the figures are based on two different cohorts, they may indicate that job mobility is approximately 3 times higher in the first 5-6 years of the working careers of alumni than in the second 5-6 years.

**Table 1**  
Paid work and unemployment

	% paid work		% unemployed	
	2003-2004	1998-1999	2003-2004	1998-1999
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
SBE	95	97	2	3
Health and Life Sciences	95	95	2	1
Medicine	95	96	0	0
Arts and Social Sciences	92	x	0	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	84	x	6	x
Law	93	98	4	2
<b>Maastricht University</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

x = too few cases

**Figure 1**  
Job Mobility



#### Job characteristics

Having a job is of course a good thing, but this does not necessarily mean that that job fits one's education. Table 2 shows the quality of the match between the UM degree held by alumni and their current job from two different perspectives. 3 out of 4 alumni who are currently employed work in jobs requiring their own or a related field of study, indicating a good horizontal match between job and labour market. Not surprisingly given the highly specific nature of their study program, all of the Medicine graduates currently work in jobs matching their own or a related field of study. Only 48% of the Arts and Social Sciences respondents in the 2003-2004 cohort work in a job related to their field, which means that half of them have jobs which require another, or no specific field of study. Interestingly, Law graduates in the older cohort are less likely to work in jobs requiring their own field than graduates of the same faculty who graduated some 5 years later (64% versus 77%). This also applies – albeit to a lesser extent – for SBE alumni.

84% of the respondents who graduated in 2003-2004 work in jobs requiring a university or higher level degree, implying an excellent vertical match between education

1. 37% of the 1772 graduates from the 2003-2004 cohort took part in the survey, while for the 1998-1999 cohort (1129 graduates) the response rate was 42%.
2. 27% of the 1445 foreign graduates that were approached took part in that survey.

and work. For the respondents of the 1998-1999 cohort this percentage is slightly higher. Surveys among alumni who recently graduated (interviewed 1 to 2 years after graduation) show that only two out of three alumni immediately find a job that matches their qualification level. This indicates that alumni are increasingly more likely to have jobs that match their educational level the longer they are active in the labour market. There are however considerable differences between the various faculties. Whereas all alumni with a background in Medicine have a job at their own level, 'only' 73% of alumni from the Health and Lifescience faculty work in jobs that require at least a university education.

**Table 2**  
Horizontal and vertical match

	% working in own or related field of study		% working at university level or higher	
	2003-2004	1998-1999	2003-2004	1998-1999
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
SBE	76	73	86	89
Health and Life Sciences	73	73	73	80
Medicine	99	100	100	100
Arts and Social Sciences	48	x	82	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	78	x	87	x
Law	77	64	88	89
<b>Maastricht University</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>87</b>

x = too few cases

The median gross income of 2003-2004 alumni is € 3500 per month, and this rises to € 4500 for 1998-1999 alumni (see Table 3). Health and Life Sciences alumni and especially Psychology and Neuroscience alumni have the lowest median income among the 2003-2004 cohort. However it has to be taken into account that they also work less hours per week than the respondents from the other faculties. The 2003-2004 cohort has an average working week of 37.1 hours, while Health and Life Sciences alumni and Psychology and Neuroscience alumni work some three hours less. However, the shorter working week cannot completely explain the above-mentioned differences in income, particularly for the graduates of the Psychology and Neuroscience faculty. For Health and Life Sciences graduates the lower income might also be partly explained by a sub-optimal match between the level of the job and the graduates' education. Among the 2003-2004 cohort the SBE students clearly earn most (€ 4400). Among the 1998-1999 cohort Health and Life Sciences alumni again have the lowest median income. Once again, this is related to the lower working hours compared to alumni from other faculties, the difference being even greater than for the 2003-2004 cohort. Medicine graduates clearly have the best position when it comes to monthly income 10 to 11 years after graduation. With an average working week of 40 hours, their average monthly income is € 6500. Overall, a comparison between the two cohorts shows a difference in the average working week of about 1 hour (35.8 versus 37.1).

**Table 3**  
Income and working hours

	gross income per month*		regular working hours per week	
	2003-2004	1998-1999	2003-2004	1998-1999
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
SBE	4400	5800	39.8	39.5
Health and Life Sciences	3100	3410	33.3	31.2
Medicine	3900	6500	40.6	40.2
Arts and Social Sciences	3198	x	34.5	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	2750	x	34.0	x
Law	3600	4500	37.8	35.8
<b>Maastricht University</b>	<b>3500</b>	<b>4500</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>35.8</b>

x = too few cases

\* Median of the gross income based on the contractual working hours in the main job.

Table 4 shows that Maastricht University alumni are strongly satisfied with their current jobs. For both cohorts 4 out of 5 alumni are (very) satisfied with their current work (overall only some 5% are dissatisfied with their job). There are however considerable differences between faculties. Among the 2003-2004 cohort, alumni with a Medicine or Law background are most satisfied. However, Law alumni from the 1998-1999 cohort are relatively less often satisfied with their work, especially in comparison with their 2003-2004 peers. This could be related to the fact that the 1998-1999 alumni from this faculty less often work in jobs requiring their own or a related field of study (see Table 2). When it comes to career opportunities the more recent graduates are somewhat more positive than those from the 1998-1999 cohort. 70% of 2003-2004 graduates feel that their job offers good career opportunities, compared to 61% for 1998-1999 graduates. The evaluation of career opportunities is very different for the different groups of alumni. This applies not only to different faculties within a given cohort, but sometimes also to two cohorts from the same faculty.

**Table 4**  
Job satisfaction, career opportunities

	% satisfied with job		job offers good career opportunities	
	2003-2004	1998-1999	2003-2004	1998-1999
Humanities and Sciences	x	x	x	x
SBE	79	78	79	69
Health and Life Sciences	68	81	53	50
Medicine	94	93	90	69
Arts and Social Sciences	86	x	59	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	76	x	61	x
Law	94	77	78	62
<b>Maastricht University</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>61</b>

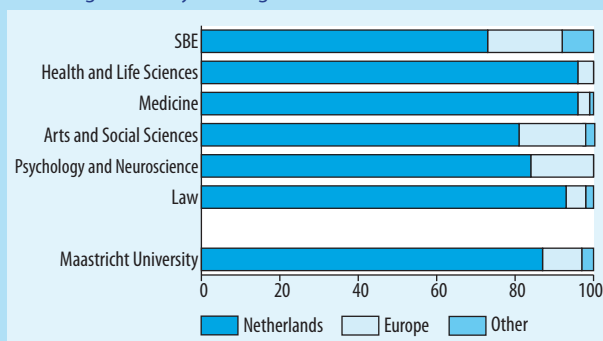
x = too few cases

### International work experience

Maastricht University is becoming more and more an internationally orientated university. This is reflected not only in the increasing number of foreign students it attracts, but also in the fact that its study programs are

increasingly aimed at an international labour market. Figure 2 shows where UM alumni in the two cohorts are currently working. At the time of the survey 87% of the respondents were working in the Netherlands, 10% had a job in another European country, while a few (3%) were working outside Europe. As the figure shows, especially alumni from the SBE, Arts and Social Sciences and Psychology and Neurosciences are relatively likely to hold a job outside the Netherlands. Only a small percentage of the alumni of the other faculties have chosen to pursue a working career outside the Netherlands. The figure shows the results for the two cohorts combined. Further analyses show that the younger cohort (2003-2004) are slightly more internationally orientated than the older cohort (15% versus 11% currently working abroad). Some 17% of the respondents in the 2003-2004 cohort and 7% of those in the 1998-1999 cohort are foreigners.<sup>3</sup> The majority of these foreign students simply return to their home country after graduation.

**Figure 2**  
Percentage currently working abroad



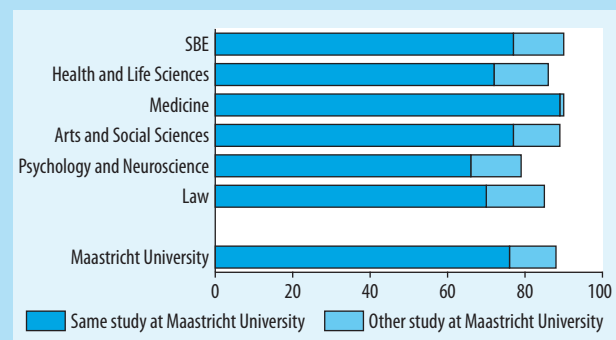
The international aspect of Maastricht University can also be seen in the high proportion of graduates who have had some work experience abroad since leaving university: 65% of the foreign alumni have work experience abroad compared to 25% of the Dutch graduates.

#### Satisfaction with study at Maastricht University

Finally, the alumni were asked whether they had any regrets regarding their choice for Maastricht University all those years ago. If they were given the opportunity to choose again, no fewer than 85% and 90% of the alumni in respectively the 2003-2004 and 1998-1999 cohorts would again choose for Maastricht University. 74% and 78% respectively would choose the same study program and 11% and 12% respectively would choose for a different study program but again at Maastricht University. Further analyses show that the higher satisfaction of the 1998-1999 cohort is rather an effect of the longer working career than an effect of the cohort.

3. Foreign is thereby based on the question in the questionnaire asking whether the respondent was living abroad at the time of applying to study at Maastricht University.

**Figure 3**  
Satisfaction with study



In line with these findings, the surveys also reveal that 8 out of 10 respondents still think that their study at Maastricht University is (very) useful for their current job. This applies very consistently to all the faculties and cohorts.

Not only are UM alumni satisfied with their UM study, they are also willing to play a more active role as 'ambassadors' for their university. The alumni were asked whether Maastricht University could contact them to ask them to give a lecture or a presentation, to act as contact person in their company should internships become available there, or to act as a 'mentor' for current students. Almost 60% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to be approached for one or more of these activities, indicating the very close bond alumni have with Maastricht University.

#### Part B: Foreign alumni

In this part, we present the results of a survey among foreign alumni who obtained their master degree between the academic years 1998-1999 and 2006-2007. The term 'foreign' graduates will be used for all graduates that were living abroad at the time of applying to study at Maastricht University. Where appropriate, we also provide results for the 'home' graduates, the graduates that were living in the Netherlands at the time of applying to the study.

In total 1700 foreign graduates (including 245 foreign graduates of the regular surveys discussed also in Part A) from 75 different nationalities were approached. German graduates (55%) and Belgian graduates (22%) form the two largest groups of foreign graduates. The proportion of no other nationality is above 5%. With around 60%, the School of Business and Administration (with a majority of German graduates) provided the largest group of foreign graduates, followed by the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (11%), the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (9% with a clear majority of Belgian graduates), the Faculty of Psychology and Neurosciences (8%, with a slight majority of Belgian graduates) and the Faculty of Law (7% with a slight majority of Belgian graduates). The lowest proportion of foreign graduates come from the Faculty of Medicine (4% of the foreign graduates obtained a diploma from this Faculty).

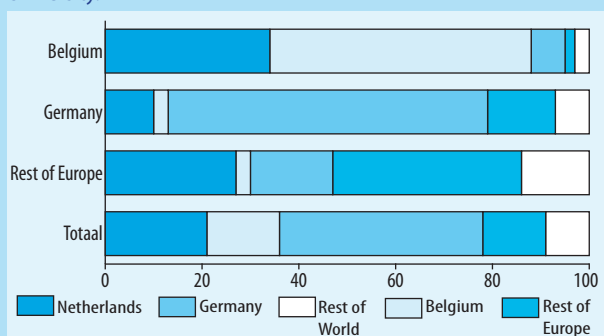
and the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences (2%). The overall response among the foreign graduates was 28%.

Below, we discuss three aspects of their working careers. First, we discuss where they work currently. Second, we look at possible ties they still have with the Netherlands and third, we ask to what extent the Maastricht University has prepared them well for an international career.

### Where do they work

21% of the foreign graduates who responded to the survey worked in 2010 in the Netherlands (see Figure 4). Germany attracts twice as many of our foreign graduates (42%). Given that a large share of the foreign graduates consists of German students, this mainly concerns of German graduates returning to their home country. Another 15% of the foreign graduates find work in Belgium and 13% in another European country. Finally, 9% of the foreign graduates work outside Europe. Figure 4 also provides more detail for three groups of foreign graduates. Of the different groups of foreign graduates, Belgian graduates are the most likely to stay in the Netherlands for work. One out of three Belgian respondents worked in the Netherlands in 2010. Nonetheless, a much higher proportion of Belgian graduates (53%) returned home to Belgium. Of the German graduates, no less than 66% worked in Germany, 10% in the Netherlands and 14% in the rest of Europe. Finally, from the foreign graduates that were living inside Europe but outside Germany and Belgium, one out of four remains for work in the Netherlands.

**Figure 4**  
Region of work by home region before applying to Maastricht University.



Note: The number of respondents who lived outside of Europe before applying to Maastricht University is too small to provide reliable figures. These are however included in the total figure.

### Connections with the Netherlands

Given that a high share of foreign graduates either return to their home country or start their working career in a third country, it is interesting to look at the extent to which their current working context is still related to the Netherlands. Table 5 provides insight into both the organizations in which the foreign graduates work abroad and the personal role they play in those organizations. At the same time, we present comparable results for home graduates (respondents who were living in the Netherlands at the time they applied

to study at Maastricht University) who worked outside the Netherlands at the time of the survey.

**Table 5**

Connection with the Netherlands while working abroad: Organization and personal role (%)

	Foreign graduates		Home graduates	
	Organization	Personal role	Organization	Personal role
Purchases goods or services from Dutch organizations	6	5	6	12
Sells goods or services to Dutch organizations	13	9	20	20
Collaborates with Dutch organizations	13	11	12	15
Recruits personnel from the Netherlands	16	8	18	13
Other professional dealings with Dutch organizations	20	15	31	31

Overall, 25% of foreign graduates employed outside the Netherlands work for an organization that is strongly connected to the Netherlands in at least one respect. Among home graduates, the figure is higher (45%), suggesting that home graduates working abroad are often employed in Dutch-based international organizations. Looking more in detail, we see that 16% of foreign graduates and 18% of home graduates who work abroad do so for organizations that recruit personnel from the Netherlands (8% and 13% respectively thereby play a personal role in the recruitment process). 13% of foreign graduates and 20% of home graduates working abroad do so in organizations that sell goods or services to the Netherlands, and respectively 13% and 12% of the organizations in which they work collaborate with Dutch organizations.

Although only a relatively small fraction of foreign graduates stay in the Netherlands for work (21%), the survey allows an initial insight into their working context. Overall, 45% of foreign graduates who stay in the Netherlands for work are employed in organizations that have strong connections with organizations outside the Netherlands. For home graduates working in the Netherlands this proportion is 31%, suggesting that, although foreign graduates employed in the Netherlands are somewhat more often employed in internationally oriented organizations, this also applies to a high proportion of home graduates.

In addition to a strongly international working context, Maastricht University graduates also have strong international social networks. This holds especially for home graduates working and living abroad and for foreign graduates living in the Netherlands. Both groups are well integrated into their host country. Some results in more detail: 71% of foreign graduates who stay in the Netherlands indicate that they have many Dutch friends and close acquaintances. In comparison, when living abroad, one third of foreign graduates have frequent contact with Dutch friends or close acquaintances and a similar proportion



often visit the Netherlands for recreation or leisure. One in five foreign graduates keeps up to date with Dutch politics and current affairs after leaving the Netherlands.

#### Preparation for an international career

How do graduates value their study at Maastricht University in terms of preparation for an international working career? Most of the graduates interviewed were satisfied with their study at Maastricht University as a basis for starting and developing their international career. Overall, 58% of home graduates and 82% of foreign graduates regard their study as providing a good basis for dealing with professional contacts in different countries and with diverse cultural backgrounds. 43% of home graduates and 78% of foreign graduates believe that their study at Maastricht University provided them with a good basis for developing a career in an international

labor market. The evaluation of these aspects of the study at Maastricht University depends not only on the country of origin of the graduates, but also on whether or not the graduates work abroad. Graduates working abroad (see Table 6) are more satisfied about their study at Maastricht University as a good basis for internationalization than graduates working in the Netherlands. This applies to both home graduates and foreign graduates.

**Table 6**

Study provides a solid basis for an international career (%)

	Home graduates		Foreign graduates	
	Inside NL	Outside NL	Inside NL	Outside NL
Dealing with different cultural backgrounds	56	72	65	87
Developing an international career	37	80	65	83

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